



The peoples Friends:
OR
A DISCOVERY
Of many in the
ARMY,

Who are yet faithfull to the
PEOPLE:

Being a perfect Relation of the Late Proceed-
ings of the *Agents* of divers Regi-
ments of Horse :

With the manner of their imprisonment, by some
Officers ; with the *PETITION* of Col. *Riches*
Regiment to the Generall for the Release
of their *Agents*.



Country-men,

East you should be weary with inquiring, who will
shew you any good? I have expended some time
to search out an Answer: but I cannot but first
justifie you in your mournfull plaint, and I could
bemoane your unhappy fate in depending upon false friends:
your hopes were once raised by the Parliaments promises to
deliver you from an Arbitrary Government, and to secure
your

your native Freedome, and to study alwayes to encrease your happinesse; and your expectations I know were bigge when you had conquered the Common Enemy: but the Warre being ended, their promises appeared to be but wind, and their fruit to you was but a whirl-wind, your Government was then by no other rule then the wills of men; Parliament Committees, and Countrey Committees were your absolute Lords, and your burthens were doubled and trebled, and no other use was made of this opportunity put into the Parliaments hands then to continue themselves sitting at *Westminster*, and to devide your Treasure amongst themselves; as for your freedome, it was made a crime almost to name it, your very Petitions were burned, and Petitioners imprisoned.

In this extremity the Army interposed in *June* last to redeeme you from your intended Vassalage, they gallantly challenged your Freedome as your due, and the price of their blood; they promised to see your Liberty cleared and secured according to the Parliaments Declarations, and solemnly engaged to you, and each to other on *June 5. 1647.* not to Disband untill they had sufficient security for your freedome; but alas, how hath pride, covetousnesse, ambition, or affectation of an absolute Dominion, blasted all the promising buds of those faire engagements! how is your hopefull remedy the Army become an aggravation of your slavery, they have made your yokes heavier, and your burthens more grievous.

But Countrey-men, Let not your hearts faile you, suppose not the whole Army to conspire in your slavery; take an impartiall view of all passages since the Armies first Engagement at *Newmarket*, on *June 5. 1647.* and learne to distinguish between your friends, and your oppressors.

You must understand that some private Soldiers in the severall Regiments, which engaged in the late Warre, conscientiously for your freedom, were the sole actors which engaged the whole Souldiery to stand unanimously to vindicate your native Freedoms, these were called *Agitators*. The grand Officers opposed the Souldiers first-Petition, as long as it was for their advantage, and never concurred with them untill all danger was past; but having interested themselves in the same Cause, although they solemnly engaged, that all things should

should be done by a Councell constituted of two Officers and two Souldiers to be chosen by every Regiment, yet their spirits could not beare any Co-partners with them in power, and therefore they first discouraged the *Agitators* as meddling with matters which did not concern them, then they questioned their power, by whom indeed themselves were settled in the power they had; and then they introduced all Officers into the Councels, when there was Councels, and at last, they quite dissolved the Councell, and some few (if not one alone) drew up a short Declaration contrary to their first Engagement, and would have enforced all at the Rendevouz at *Ware* and *Kingstone* to subscribe it; so that by the Grand Officers wresting all power out of the *Agitators* hands, this settlement of your Freedoms, and the removall of your grievances hath been prevented; yet the same honest Souldiers in *November* last, attempted the same settlement as at first; but the Grand Officers imprisoned the *Agents*, and threatned them all with death.

Yet so restless are the spirits of the honest Souldiers, and so deare is the Freedom of their Countrey to them, that the Officers threatnings of death cannot daunt them, and therefore they have been and are again endeavouring to fulfill their first Engagements, and to prevent obstructions, they resolved to proceed in the most humble way of Petitioning, and to that purpose, drew that Petition which you may hereafter read in this Paper; having prepared their Petition, they desired a meeting of some Souldiers of severall Regiments of Horse, to consider of the most speedy way to offer the Petition to all the Souldiers for their Subscriptions, accordingly some met at *S. Albans* about the 24 of *April*, and Colonell *Riches* Regiment chose one of every Troop to meet there and give them an account of their proceedings, but being met together, Cap. *Brown*, Cap. *Cladman*, Cap. *Packer*, and other Officers rushed violently into the place, where they were met, and imprisoned all their persons, and carryed them to *Windfor*, where they remaine Prisoners.

Now yee people of *England*, whether these Prisoners be your friends, I referre to your own judgements, let the Petition which they were promoting, and joyning in with the Eastern Association, let that speak for them.

The true Copy thereof here follows.

*To the honourable the Commons of England assembled in Parliament.
The humble Petition of many Officers and Souldier in the Army.
Sheweth,*

That first we ingaged in Iudgement and conscience, to oppose the King in assuming to himselfe a power Superiour to yours, declaring all your Orders to be void and nul without his consent, in his clayming an absolute power over the *Militia*, and in his endeavours to make the Government wholly Arbitray, and himselfe unaccountable; and you for your parts were ingaged to restore us to our native Freedomes, if God gave good successe to that war, that when the common enemy was subdued they should thirst after our native Freedoms, prevailed with us to concurr with you in a new engagement, in opposition to a potent party in the house which invaded our liberties, and endeavoured to perpetuate this Parl. and inslave us againe to Arbitrary power; and you were pleased then to give us hopes by divers Votes, that the happy ends of our former and latter Engagements should be made good to us, and the whole Nation; that neverthelesse we see the oppressions of the people as far from being removed or lessened, as if our ranlome cost no blood, and yet we find our selves to be rendred the burthen and disturbers of the Nation, by the daily outcries against us for not standing up for Iustice and Freedome, according to your and our promises and Declarations; and although we doe gratefully acknowledge these hopefull Votes that no more addressess should be made to, nor received from the King; yet hitherto we see no Iustice or common freedom hath followed those Votes: that the sence of our duty to the Country, and that feare of compulsion which threatens the Common-Wealth through the generall discontent of the people, provokes us to sollicite in their behalves: that the engagements first and last, and the many pretences of this house to make the Nation free, may at last be fulfilled and performed; We humbly represent our former desires with a more full explanation of our intention therein. As first that a period of time be prefixed when the Parliament shall certainly end. 2. That of course every second yeare there be a free and equall election of representatives by the people, to make their Lawes free without obstructions or interruptions, by the pretences of any man whomsoever, to a negative voice or check upon them: that so no English man may be bound but by his representatives without which there is no freedom. 3. That

there be a known and certain rule between the people and their representatives that are chosen and intrusted with that supreme power of making Lawes; as first, that the time of their continuance or trust be certaine, and that their meeting be dissolved of course at some prefixed period of time. And 2. that it be declared, that their power extends not to inforce and compell the consciences of any in the matter of Gods worship: wherein none can without wilfull sin consent, remit, or exceed one title what their consciences dictates to them to be the will of God. 3. That their power extends not to presse or inforce any mans person to serve in War. And 4. that it be declared to be intended by the people in their trust, that all Laws to be made by them may be equall and alike, binding unto every English man, without respect to Birth, Tennor, Pattent, Place, Office or any other pretended privilege, and that they shall not make such Laws as shall be clearly and evidently destructive to their lives, properties, and liberties. And 5. that for security of all persons engaged in the publick difference since 1640. It be declared that no representatives of the people after the end of this present Parliament shall have power to intermeddle with those matters of publique difference; otherwise then in execution of their judgement: And we desire that this rule between the people and the representatives, may be inserted into a contract to be sealed between the people and all their representatives, upon the dayes of their severall elections respectively; and that all the foregoing particulars being essentiall to freedome, may be tested by an Agreement among the people.

4. That there be a regulated course of justice settled, and all arbitrary powers abolished as farre as may be.

5. That all dangerous Presidents of preventing the people from, and imprisoning of, and declaring them as enemies to the State, for petitioning may be taken away, and that undoubted right of theirs publicly cleared. 6. That accounts be given to the people of their disbursements of the vasse Summes of money levied and paid; and that henceforth all publick charges be exactly computed, and only monies proportionable levied, and that the accounts be open to the view of all men, and frequently published: 7 That all Prisoners according to the intent of the Law be brought to a speedy hearing, and just triall. And that such as are unjustly imprisoned may with their liberties have due reparations. 8. That the ancient and almost antiquated badge of slavery, that is, all base Tenures of Lands, as by Copyes and Fines at will, by oathes of fealty, homage: &c. (the Conquerours brand upon the people) may be taken away, and to that end, that a proportionable value be set, at which the Possessors of Land so holden, may purchase themselves free-holders, which if not willing, or not able to doe, that then after a prefixed period of time, all such duties and services may descend into, and be paid by, the Crown.

vented from drawing mento a War against themselves, by vertue of an awe upon them by such dependant Tenures.

These things we humbly pray may be done, se led, and provided forthwith, that so speedy proceedings may be made to redresse the other common grievances of the people; that our Lawes and all proceedings therein may be in English, and the innumerable abuses thereof remedied, and the places for ministration of justice and justice it selfe may no longer be bought and sold, that Monopolies may be abolished and care taken to renew the decayed trade of the Nation, that the poor may be provided for, and none suffered to beg their bread; that publick debts may be computed and put into some probable way of being satisfied; the burthens of tythes, excise, and whatsoever else is justly grievous may be removed: And unlesse these prudent foundations of freedom and just Government may be established, we conceive that neither you nor we can satisfie our consciences, that so much blood hath been shed in the prosecution thereof, or in continuing an Army, who contrary to their own desire are constrained to live upon the labours of others for nought, and therefore desire that sufficient indemnity may be provided for all our engagements whatsoever, with either Parliament or Army, in all things done in order to our utmost prosecution thereof; that accounts may be justly stated, that some considerable part of the Souldiers arrearcs may be given them, and good security for the remainder; and that we may be discharged from this present employment, either to returne quietly to our severall callings, if we can beare the yoke of our slavery, or otherwise to depart the Nation, to seek our freedome in some wildernesse.

THE imprisonment of the Agents for preparing this Petition, much affected the Soldiery of Col. Riebes Regiment, and with all speed they framed a Petition to the Generall for the release of their Agents. The Copy thereof here followeth

To his Excellency *Thomas Lord Fairfax* Captain Generall of the Forces under the Command of the *Parliament*.

The humble Petition of the Souldiers of Colonel Rich his Regiment,

Sheweth,

THAT as in Iudgement and conscience, we first engaged in the late Warre, for our Native rights and freedoms, so likewise upon the same account, we refused to Disband, and entred into a solemn Engagement at New-Market, when our freedoms were invaded, and the fundamentall right of Petitioning denied us.

That upon the same ground, after much patience in waiting for the securing our common Rights according to the Engagement, we intrusted severall of our fellow Souldiers to meet with some of other Regiments at S. Albans, to give us an account of their proceedings.

That while they were proceeding in a most unquestionable just way of preparing a Petition, they were violently seized upon, and imprisoned, all which (if it were done by Order from your Excellency) we hope did proceed from a misunderstanding of our, and

That our fellow Souldiers being employed by us as Agents in our behalfe, we esteeme our selves obliged both in conscience and honour to be Copartners with them in whatsoever condition they are, or shall be involved by reason of that imployment; and our resolutions are to adhere faithfully to them, in the vindication of their innocent intentions, in prosecuting our solemn Engagement, or to suffer equally with them.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray, that our said Agents now under restraint may be forthwith released, according to the present urgent necessities, and without further defanting delays, which have already made us odious to the people, we may all joyne together, and effectually endeavour to fulfill our first engagements to the people, and each to the other, by sitting, and securing the Nations common Rights and Freedomes.

And they shall pray &c.

THe Regiment employed two Soldiers to present this Petition, and after the Grand Officers had long consulted, they called in the Messengers, and descanted strangely up on the Petition, and examined them upon Interrogatories, *as who delivered it to them, and whom they see subscribe it*; but the messengers refused to betray their liberties in answering Interrogatories, and told them they were employd by the Regiment to deliver the Petition and their Subscriptions were annexed, and they had no other message; then they threatened them with death severally, but yet they said at last they would shew them mercy, and so released them.

Now Countrey-men, consider how deeply you are concerned in the imprisonment of these your friends, judge whether your Freedoms can ever be secured, unless the foregoing Petition be granted, and judge how desperate your condition is, if once your Liberty of Petitioning be lost, if it shall be a crime to meet and consider how to beg for your Right, unto what lower degree of slavery, can you be reduced? The Parliament have declared it, to be their duty to receive Petitions though against established Lawes: They are their words in their Declaration of Sept. 2. 1642. 1. book Decla. p. 532. *We acknowledge wee have received Petitions for the removeall of things established by Law, and we must say, and all that know what belong to the course and practice of Parliaments, will say, that we ought to doe so, and the Liberty of Petitioning, being the lowest degree of freedoms*; the invasion of that was the first occasion of the Armies refusall to disband, and engaging against Hollis his Faction; therefore I say again, consider whether necessity do not now require your speedy assistance of these your Friends, who have thus constantly endeavored and hazarded themselves for your freedome; and observe good people, it is not the Souldiery that enslave you, but they are enslaved equally with you, they are denied the common right of petitioning, and for your sakes they suffer.

Object.

Object. But it will be objected that the great Officers oppose not the Freedom, which the Souldiers thus prosecute, but their irregular manner of their prosecution of it.

Ans^r. Wherein can it be said they have been irregular? is it in Petitioning without their Officers? was there ever such a band upon the Souldiers, either by the Law or Reason, that they should not Petition without their Officers? shall not the Souldiers begge for what they want, unless they please? but suppose there be some irregularity, in riding from one Regiment to another without licence from their Officers or disputing such Commands, yet who could have imagined that the Officers of this Army should dare to object it against the Souldiery? will not the necessity of such actions justify the seeming irregularities; was not that all their plea in June last, when they were irregular in the highest degree, and rejoiced and applauded the Souldiers for their being irregular; and was it not upon the same ground that they opposed the Parliament, because they made an Order to suppress a Petition amongst the Souldery, and declared those Enemies to the State that promoted it, and though that Petition was promoted contrary to the Officers minds, and Col. Rich and others sent expresse Orders to suppress it, and though the Parliament proceeded not to imprison such as act about it; yet when they were interested in it, they declared in their Representation of June 5. that that President of the Parliaments Order to suppress the Petition, if it should stand good, did tend in the consequence of it, to render all Souldiers under this Parliament the worst of slaves, and all subjects little better; and the like they declared in the Remonstr. of June 13. but besides, is it more irregular to dispute an Officers Command than to dispute the Parliaments Orders? and did not the Generall, and the Lieutenant Generall counterance the Souldiers, and approve them, when they resolved a Rendezvous without the Generall, if he would not Order it, and were any of the Souldiers discountenanced when they dismounted, bear and houted out of the field such Officers as would have obeyed the Parliaments Commands? and surely, none will say there is not now the same necessity to justify these actions as was then; nay, is not the necessity farre greater? the Liberties of the people are neither cleared nor secured, the very right of Petitioning, is in a higher manner invaded, more are now imprisoned for Petitioning and meeting about Petitions, then ever since England stood, and not only the Parliament, but the Army is now so odious to the people for breaking their first promises and engagements, that the people are ready to cut the throats of all Souldiers without distinction, and the whole Nation is ready to perish with distractions and discontents through want of a settlement.

Now let all English men and all Souldiers consider, whether they may not bid adieu to Freedom, if they suffer their friends to want assistance in prosecuting their first Engagements. Col. Riches Regiment have been constrained to rescue some of their Agents from Prison, and therefore they expect now the immediate assistance of all honest men in every Regiment.

